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The Political Organization of the Dorobo

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1. The Effect of Contact with the Nandi

Although the wording of a Dorobo text suggests that the Dorobo[1] were originally in contact with the Masae before the Nandi appeared on the scene[2], nevertheless before 1925 the effective outside contacts of the Dorobo were mainly with the Nandi; and their political system has acquired so much superficial resemblance to that of the Nandi that any investigation of the Dorobo system must begin with a short survey of the contact between the two peoples. Since the establishment of relations between the Dorobo and the Nandi (in particular those of SE Nandi and their blacksmiths), there has been, with certain reservations, a state of friendliness between the two peoples. The Nandi have always tolerated the Dorobo as long as they live outside Nandi, and have always been half afraid of them as rainmakers and magicians; the Dorobo in turn fear the Nandi because they are a group much larger and stronger than they themselves are.

The two groups thus brought into contact are of very unequal size (the population of the Nandi is close on 50 000), and of unequal advancement

[1] For the first part of this study, see Anthropos 46. 1951. pp. 1-48.

[2] When describing circumcision during the course of telling me his life-story, Arap Mining used these words: *Ngut kepua tum Okiot keny komekomi Nandiek, kepua ak Ipkuapek*, by which I understand him to mean that Dorobo acted as circumcisors for the Uasin Gishu Masae before the Nandi had come. The passage is a little obscure, for the verb *kepua* is plural, and the apparent subject *Okiot* singular. When I wrote it down, I did not realize its significance.

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in material culture. The Nandi keep cattle, till the soil, make pottery, and work iron, none of which the Dorobo did; and they have passed on to the Dorobo a number of things which have now become an inseparable part of Dorobo culture without receiving much from the Dorobo in return. Although the Nandi have never lived in the forest, they occupied and grazed their cattle till 1906 on the open ground to the west and southwest of the forest — the original Nandi divisions of Kamelilo and Kapcepkendi — and so contact was inevitable. There has been no fusion of the Dorobo with the Nandi; the few intermarriages have not resulted in anything like even partial fusion, and Dorobo who have lived for years in Nandi, like Arap Ngamngam and his sons, are regarded as nothing but Dorobo. Although KRAPF said that the "Wamau people are Wandurobo whose duty it is to hunt elephants for the Masai" [3], there are no indications whatever that the Kipkurerek ever had any "duties" to perform for the Nandi, and the occasional employment of a Dorobo as circumcisor by Nandi or Masae does not constitute "subjection". The Dorobo and Nandi have in fact lived their own separate lives, though they now share a good many cultural features which have been voluntarily adopted by the Dorobo.

A good deal, in fact, of their existing culture has been adopted from the Nandi, and among these adopted features we may include the following:

1. Clan names and possibly the totem idea, though not the clan system.
2. The method of dividing the country into districts or parishes (the Nandi *koret* system), and the resulting *koret* council (which is the basis of Nandi government).
3. Some relationship terms.
4. The age-set system, and circumcision.
5. Certain features of material culture like dress, ornaments, the use of iron objects, pottery and tobacco, and a certain type of hut. It is these features which give the Dorobo a superficial but misleading resemblance to the Nandi.
6. Language and time-reckoning.

The existence of Nandi clan-names, relationship terms, and time-reckoning may be accounted for by the use of the Nandi language. Circumcision and age-sets are definitely an Hamitic feature, and obviously borrowed from the Nandi complete with names and intervals. But the clan system is so fundamental a part of Dorobo organization that it must have existed before contact was made with the Nandi.

From the Dorobo point of view, their reception of Nandi culture may be expressed thus: Certain elements forced on them by economic pressure, like agriculture and stock, lead to economic advantage, as of course does the voluntary adoption of iron weapons and tools. Female dress and ornaments adopted voluntarily lead to prestige, while clan names, relationship

[3] Vocabulary of the Engutuk Eloikob (1854), p. 28. KRAPF seems to have been the first to suggest that the Dorobo were serfs of the Masae, a notion which I think is just as mistaken with regard to other Dorobo as it is to the Kipkurerek.

[Text continues on p. 126 -- Analyst]

Sketch-Map of the Kipkurerek Dorobo Country.

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terms and other intangible elements, because of their suitability, fitted into the existing culture pattern and were thus voluntarily adopted. The Nandi, not being bee-experts, none the less desire honey; not being hunters, they desire furs; the Dorobo being both bee-keepers and hunters can supply the Nandi with what they want, and in return get from the Nandi things which they cannot produce. The satisfaction of these desires has undoubtedly helped in the transmission of Nandi culture to the Dorobo, and it has also preserved the continuity of friendly relations between the two peoples.

When I first met the Dorobo in 1927 they were virtually as they had been in pre-European days: a purely hunting people with a basically non-Nandi organization heavily overlaid and modified by Nandi influence, yet distinct in outlook and way of life — so distinct in fact that having taken to agriculture and cattle simultaneously, they have not acquired the cattle complex of the pastoralist and retain the outlook of the hunter.

2. The Clan and its Place in Public Life

The life of the horde is controlled by two institutions: the clan and its council, and the *koret* council. The clan council may be described as a primary institution working within the framework of the *koret* organization. The Dorobo are not a "tribe" like the Nandi, and the clan-system does not strengthen tribal solidarity, but it does strengthen and maintain horde-unity by bringing together clansmen from the whole area to deal with clan affairs. The clan council deals with matters which concern members of the clan; the *koret* council is more political and less domestic, regulating the district as a whole irrespective of clan.

If behaviour and kinship are the basis of social life, the clan is the basis of horde-cohesion and government; and it is in regard to the importance attached to the clan that Dorobo social organization differs fundamentally from that of the Nandi. To the latter, the clan is in practice little more than a means of regulating marriage, and a traditional form of tribal division (though it has actually a deeper but less easily defined significance); but to the Dorobo the regulation of public life as a whole depends upon the clan, and its social importance is emphasized by the habit of living in clan settlements, by the clan councils, and by the stress laid on the group-aspect rather than on the totem-aspect of the clan. Moreover, clan-solidarity crosses the *koret* boundaries, and is the main factor that keeps the horde together under conditions which would render powerless any institution less strong.

The social aspect of the clan has been described in a previous paper [4], and this aspect need not therefore be touched upon here. People tend to live in clan settlements, and therefore the institution of a clan council is both natural and easily maintained. The clan council consists of all the old men of the clan, that is, the men of the age-sets senior to the age of the *murenik* who correspond to the fighting men of the Nandi; though in practice it has become customary for anyone who has been circumcised to attend the council

[4] Anthropos 46. 1951. pp. 38-41.

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and speak at it. People meet at the house of a clansman who, upon notice being given to him, prepares as much honey-wine as he can for the entertainment of the gathering, and what he provides may be supplemented by wine brought by other members. The business of the council is done with the aid of a jar of honey-wine in an informal way as if it were a social gathering, which in a sense it is, for the clan council through its informality has become a social bond between clansmen. Business is done first, and the drinking soon follows. The subjects which may be discussed include:

1. Disputes between members of the clan.
2. Hunting disputes.
3. Disputes about boundaries of hunting areas.
4. The preliminary business when a clansman has killed a member of another clan.
5. Homicide within the clan.
6. Sexual intercourse between a man and a girl of the clan. Disputes under heads 1-3 are settled by discussion, the leader of the council swaying, by his opinion, the views of the members. The leader, *kiruokindet*, is not necessarily the oldest member of the clan, for such a man might be too senile to act properly; but someone fairly senior in age, with his faculties intact, who is liked and respected, becomes in course of time (as in the case of the leader of the *koret* council) looked upon as a responsible person who can be safely listened to and whose judgement is sound.

More serious matters, like those under heads 4-6, are dealt with like the rest by discussion, but there is as well a certain traditional procedure to follow. When a clansman has killed a member of another clan, the council of the dead man's clan meets to discuss the compensation payable, and to choose a messenger who will be sent to the council of the murderer's clan to start proceedings, which after a preliminary discussion, are heard before the *koret* council, since two different clans are involved, and the matter is not purely the affair of one clan. When a man kills a member of his own clan, the whole matter is settled within the clan. First, the murderer has to brew some honey-wine and kill a goat from which the fat is collected. Then old men of both the families concerned meet at the house of the murderer and drink the wine he has provided, after which two of the old men oil the murderer all over with the goat's fat. The animal from which this fat is obtained must be a goat, and if the murderer has none of his own, he must get one by purchase or theft. He is therefore put to some trouble and even danger, for if he has to steal a goat he risks being speared if caught, and this constitutes an act of faith which, together with the anointing of his body, frees him from the uncleanness caused by the shedding of human blood. There is no payment of compensation for the murder of a clansman, but the murderer must if he can give his victim's wife one cow to help towards her maintenance. This last is a Nandi custom and was probably introduced in recent times after the Dorobo had begun to acquire cattle in a small way.

Sexual intercourse between a man and a girl of his clan is not an offence provided the girl does not have a baby, though the lover is not allowed

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614 to marry her, and should the affair become known (as such things usually
623 do), the clan council can prevent, if necessary by force, any attempt of the
684 man to do so. Although such intercourse is not technically an offence, it is
[848] nevertheless regarded with great disapproval, and may result in the man's temporary ostracism, for as an elder told me, *ingoruiyo cī ok cept ap tiliet, caluokto ne oo kut, amu mecome apaiisiek ngut mecome cesowilōk*, "if a man
[M5] lies with a girl of his *tiliet* (by which he meant clan), it is a very great sin, for not only do the old men disapprove, but the spirits also disapprove". If, however, the act should result in a baby, then it becomes incest, and a very serious offence, treated as if it were intercourse with a relative in the *tiliet*, and summary punishment is inflicted on both offenders, for the crime of incest offends the *cesowilōk*, the spirits of the dead, and if the guilty are not punished there is a danger that the spirits in their wrath may hurt indiscriminately not only them but innocent people as well. So in such cases, when it is known that a girl has had a baby, the man is beaten by the men and women of his own clan, his hut is burned, his honey-barrels are destroyed, and he must provide a goat to be eaten by the male and female relatives of the girl. She herself is also beaten by women of her clan. This punishment is inflicted after due discussion at the clan council, and is therefore not just a spontaneous expression of group-resentment, but the deliberate action of public authority.

614 Much of what has just been written applies to the past, that is, to the
648 time before the Government attempted to establish the Dorobo in Nandi
162 in 1937; and my census in 1939 revealed that there were comparatively few old men left, many less, in fact, than there were in 1927. The clan groupings therefore do not show so many old men as would have appeared normally, and
[561] most of the existing seniors of to-day are elder members of the Nyongi age-set, whose maximum age in 1939 was fifty. Some idea of the composition of a clan
614 settlement in that year is given by the following particulars from my census:
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At Kipukua and Kipkorom, 2 miles apart; all Moi clan.	1 Kaplelac. 1 married Nyongi, wife and children. 1 married Maina, wife and children. 5 unmarried Maina. 1 Juma. 3 old women and 1 girl.
At Kepen; Moi and Kapsekoi clans:	1 Kimnyike. 2 married Nyongi, wives and children. 3 unmarried Nyongi. 6 unmarried Maina.
At Ndoroton and Ngatepkong, 3 miles apart; all Kipieken.	1 married Nyongi, wife absent. 4 unmarried Maina. 2 Juma. 3 widows and 2 girls living with them. 1 married Nyongi, wife and children. 1 married Maina, wife and children. 1 unmarried Nyongi.

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These of course are relatively small settlements; but there were more people living round and inside the forest in 1927, and a number of them has been scattered owing to the effect of the 1937 move. The manner in which clan settlements are distributed may be seen from the map.

3. The Koret

The methods by which primitive people govern themselves and maintain law and order can usually be studied in operation, even if they are not immediately obvious to the casual visitor. The observation of concrete facts and events can elucidate even the uncentralized organizations that are so difficult to understand, and so common in East Africa, where there may often be no chiefs, and no visible authority but groups of old men. Some of the more important peoples of Kenya, like the Masae, Nandi, and Akamba had systems of this type, and the Dorobo also were similarly organized. But in the case of the Dorobo the difficulties in the way of investigation were greatly increased as a result of the move of 1937, an action which it was hoped would place the Dorobo in more favourable conditions and increase their chances not only of cultural advancement, but of ultimate survival; and in 1939 I was told that no *koret* council had been held since before 1937. I was therefore unable to observe this aspect of Dorobo life, and the account of their district organization that follows is based on their own statements. Information was obtained from a number of senior Dorobo, and it was possible to check their statements to a certain extent, so that taken in conjunction with the information I collected in 1927 the somewhat slight and unavoidably incomplete picture is, I think, correct as far as it goes.

The Dorobo are divided into three age-grades: *apaiisiek*, elders; *murenik*, circumcised men; and *uetik*, boys. The *apaiisiek* and *murenik* are those who take part in public affairs; *uetik* have no voice in them. Women, too, though they have the grades of *engitokisiek*, old women; *yosotik*, married women; and *tipik*, girls; have no official share in public affairs, however much influence they may have at home over their husbands and relatives. Neither they nor boys may attend council meetings, unless they happen to be major participants in some affair, as for instance, when a widow accuses someone of an offence against her.

The Dorobo divide their forest country into a number of districts called *koret*, pl. *korosuek*. The names of nine districts are recorded, and these are, from north to south:

1. Cepurur, on the northern edge of the forest.
2. Kelpui: the NW corner of the forest.
3. Sirua: south of Kelpui.
4. Kipkorom: from Sirua to the SW corner of the forest.
5. Sosoiyo: east of Kipkorom.
6. Meteitei: between the forest and the Meteitei river.
7. Mokopic: east of Kipkorom.
8. Puret: east of Sirua.
9. Sangalo: east of Sirua.

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634 [161] [178] To-day, only three of these districts are inhabited, Kaïpai, Kipkoreum and Soeniyo (with which Meteitei has been amalgamated). The inhabitants of the empty *koroonik* have joined the three inhabited districts, gone right away, or died.

These *koroonik* correspond with the Nandi *koruinuk* (sing. *korut*) as the administrative units, the difference being that the Dorobo districts are larger than those of the Nandi, and that they consist mostly of forest, or forest with a strip of open land in front of it, whereas the Nandi districts are mostly parkland with patches of forest in places. Each Dorobo *korut* had its council, *kiruokut*, with a leader or spokesman, *kiruokindet* or *apaiyot*, "the old man". The *kiruokindet* was not a chief at all, as we understand the word. He held his position, not by descent, nor by election, but, as the Dorobo expressed it, by *saliepta kilio*, "by the power of his tongue only", or more precisely, by virtue of his age, character, personality, and ability. Nor did the *kiruokindet* act for the whole horde. Each council was independent so far as its decisions went; but the interacting ties of clanship, the sense of "being Dorobo" fostered by isolation and suspicion of the outside world, and the absolute need for Dorobo to stick together, united them more than one might expect, and certainly more than the nebulous authority of a horde-chief could have done.

634 623 628 [186]

In 1939 no *koret* council met, as far as I know, and there was nobody then holding the office of *kiruokindet* in any of the three districts. I learned, however, that the last *kiruokindet* of Kipkoreum was one Cemuren arap Cepoiku, a Kimnyike, who died some years before my visit, and might perhaps have been 55 years old when he was in office; that the last *kiruokindet* of Soeniyo had been Kipkatam arap Ngamngam, who was still alive in 1939, aged about 80, and was said to have been *kiruokindet* at the time of the last Nandi War in 1905, which would make him about 45 when he took office, which he resigned before 1925; and that the last *kiruokindet* of Meteitei was Nzascas arap Meirica, a Kipkolimet who died "many years ago", and must have been over sixty at the time of the Nandi War. The phrase "in office" must not be taken too literally: there was nothing official about a Dorobo *kiruokindet*, and he was really no more than a primus inter pares who from his character and personality was looked upon as a fit person to listen to.

634 633 623 [182] 177

These facts would seem to indicate that not only had no council been held since before 1937, but that the system itself was already beginning to fall into disuse independently of the move of 1937, its place being taken more and more by the clan council. I think there is no doubt that the *koret* council was a feature acquired from the Nandi, and that while the Nandi lived close to the Dorobo it functioned smoothly. But the Nandi were cleared away from the forest in 1906, and for a time there was a break in their residential contact with the Dorobo. After a time, they began to come back, in smaller numbers than before, and only as squatters on the farms into which the area had meanwhile been divided; but as a result of this short break the Dorobo had lost some of their familiarity with them, and their characteristic shyness had taken its place. I noticed that when Dorobo

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were having a meeting of any sort, however informal, at which they wanted to speak of anything important, they were careful to exclude Nandi from it; and if a Nandi insisted on intruding, they would talk only of trivial matters till he had gone. One day when I was talking to some Dorobo about their land, they insisted on my sending out of earshot a Nandi who was with me — they even took me out of his sight and spoke in low voices, for the subject was too serious to be heard and perhaps ridiculed by a Nandi. It is thus not difficult to understand how an acquired feature like the *kwet* can fall into disuse; and this is what I believe has happened among the Dorobo. Pressure of various kinds was by 1937 forcing the Dorobo to be more wary than ever, and the clan system could give them all the administrative organization they needed. Hence the *kwet* council could lapse, and with it the office of *kirwokindet*, though the *kwet* names remained, as they had become useful terms of reference.

Nevertheless, the *kwet* council is closely associated with the punishment of crime, and it is therefore necessary to understand something of the way in which it did its work in the past.

All the elders and circumcised men of a district formed the council. They met at the foot of a tree where the undergrowth was cleared away to make an open space. Any tree would do, for unlike the Nandi they had no special trees which mark the *kwenonk*. The functions of the *kwet* council were described briefly by a Dorobo in the following words: *Kerwa nakit ni kwic ce miyac ak ce yar, ni kokac pik tukul. Ingwenic ok ake tukul, kwen ni kwa cwat ake*, "We take counsel that we may find what is good and leave what is bad so that all men may understand. If any man refuses, he is driven out of our country". Questions of theft and homicide were discussed by the council; it considered what steps to take when food was scarce; and disputes of all sorts between people of different clans were heard and settled. The decision of the council was announced by the *kirwokindet*, who after sensing the opinion of the meeting, would stand up and say what ought to be done. It was then left to the people concerned to carry out the suggestion, for such it was, in effect, rather than an order.

The way in which the law is enforced is liable to be something of a puzzle to the casual observer. The mainspring of Dorobo political organization is public opinion, and behind public opinion is the fear of the dead. People know that it is wrong, that is, contrary to custom, to do a certain thing; they know also that if they do it, their friends will do something unpleasant to them, and, what is really most important of all, they know that *mamwa ramwinti*, "the spirits of the dead disapprove". Hence in order to understand how Dorobo law works, one must know something about their religious beliefs. To the European these reasons no doubt seem feeble; but they are effective in that the Dorobo have been able to survive till to-day as a unit sufficiently law-abiding to hold its own and carry on its existence in face of human and non-human enemies, and to maintain its place as a living organization.

Among people like the Nandi, the council habit has become an almost daily business, has in fact almost come to be the equivalent of a club, though without the conviviality of a club; but this is not possible for people who

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623 live under such conditions as the Dorobo. The dense forest, crossed by a
687 path only at one corner, the scattered groups of huts each in the old days
341 shut off from the next by a wall of trees, and the precarious hand to mouth
existence of a hunting economy, all operate against the spending of much
time in meeting others away from home merely to talk. And so the council
was a more serious affair and held only when necessary; moreover its
seriousness was emphasized, in the case of the clan council, by the provision
of honey-wine so that it became a social as well as an administrative institution.
623 Though Dorobo had their quarrels and disputes, they were not cattle men,
691 and so were saved from one of the commonest causes of litigation in Africa,
disputes over stock ownership and inheritance, which can occupy so much
of the time of a pastoral tribe. The possessions of a Dorobo — his bow, his
knife, his honey-barrels — do not reproduce themselves, and his bees and
dogs, important as they are, have not the same significance as cattle when
questions of inheritance are raised.

4. Crime and its Results

681 When a man had heard the decision of the council go against him,
and knew that he should do this or that, did he always do it? As often as
not, I believe, he obeyed because he felt the force of public opinion. Africans
are very sensitive to what their own people think of them, and as a last resort
the elders could call on the young men, the *murenik*, to enforce their
decisions. If a man, knowing that he had to pay an ox as compensation,
persisted in his failure to produce the animal, two or three *murenik* could
be sent by the council to persuade him by moral or if necessary physical
force to obey. But in a small community like that of the Dorobo a man just
could not afford to have everybody's disapproval or resentment directed
against him; and the strength of public opinion as an incentive to obey orders
is very real. It is a strong element in horde cohesion. Moreover, behind it
is the fear of the spirits, to which we shall return later on.

674 Crimes and offences for which some form of action is taken fall into
673 two categories, public delicts, or crimes against the horde as a whole, and
private delicts, or offences against individuals. The former are the more
serious, since their commission may affect not only the offender, but also
674 others with whom he is connected. Such crimes include incest, intercourse
with a clanswoman, killing a clansfellow, witchcraft, killing an enemy (but see
below), and disobedience to the council. These crimes are "public" because
their commission is regarded as likely to affect others besides the criminal.
Incest and intercourse with a clanswoman (equivalent to incest) are displeasing
to the *ceuwiloi*, the spirits, and unless appropriate action is taken, the people
may suffer. Murder of a clansman, though in one sense a private delict, is
really to be classed among public delicts because it strikes at the foundations
of horde unity, the clan. And though killing an enemy is not in itself a
crime, it nevertheless brings the killer into the same state of danger to himself
and others as killing a Dorobo, and thus necessitates ceremonial cleansing.

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Private delicts include trespass, that is, hunting on another's land in the forest; theft, of honey-barrels in particular and of other things in general; murder; adultery; and assault. These are offences for which compensation is payable, or for which a man may kill the offender, e.g. for theft, though if he does so he must pay compensation for murder. Offences which concern fellow clansmen are dealt with by the clan council. Others came within the province of the *kowt* council, which was not a daily affair, nor held at stated times, but only when there was a definite reason. When a person had some business which needed the calling of a council, he told the *kiruokiondet*, who passed word round the *kowt* that people should assemble on a certain day. If, for example, a man had been robbed of a honey-barrel, and knew who had stolen it, he would put the matter before the council, partly to decide on the amount of compensation, for the amount might vary according to the thief's circumstances, and partly to have public opinion behind him when he enforced his claim for payment. I believe that on the whole theft among the Dorobo themselves was not very common; and certain kinds of theft are regarded by them as so mean that a man must be very depraved indeed who will commit them. Besides, in a small horde whose members feel that outside their own circle every man's hand is against them, and to whom a stranger is a potential enemy until proved a friend, the need for unity and absence of friction is overwhelming if they are to survive. I certainly heard of no cases of theft during the period of my investigations.

We may now pass on to describe some of the traditional measures taken against offenders.

Incest. Incest means intercourse between a man and a woman of his *iliat* (that is, one whom he calls by a relationship term), and a clanswoman. We have already described the punishment for this (*see above, p. 127 f.*), which in the first case is carried out with the approval of the *kowt* council, and in the second, under the authority of the clan council.

Killing a Dorobo. When a man killed a Dorobo belonging to another clan, the council of the dead man's clan met to discuss the amount of compensation that was to be paid (*ser*), and then sent word to the council of the murderer's clan. This meant that the offence had been recognized, and that action must be taken. The council of the murderer's *kowt* then assembled so that arrangements for payment could be made and become known to everybody. The murderer also had to be purified, in the same way as when the victim was a clansman. The *kowt* council then met again to discuss the amount of the compensation. This, it seems, was usually reckoned at *nine* head of cattle (*male or female*), though it is doubtful if the full number was ever enforced [1], and if the murderer was a poor man with

[1] The number nine is probably due to imitation of the Nandi procedure, where nine is the amount payable as compensation for homicide.

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682 623 692 few relatives it would be very much less. The murderer had to provide as many of the number decided upon as he could, either from his own herd if he had one, or by getting them from the Nandi in exchange for furs, which meant, of course, that the cattle would be either oxen or worn-out old cows, and that he would not be able to provide many himself. It therefore fell to his relatives and clansmen to make up the number, which needed a clan council to apportion the balance among them, and also resulted in a good deal of feeling against the murderer for a time. Until the amount had been [614] agreed upon by both clan and *kowé* councils, the murderer was liable (in theory at least) to be killed by his victim's relatives, so he had to lie low till the negotiations were completed, though again it is doubtful if they would actually have gone as far as killing him, for then they themselves would merely have had to return the cattle as compensation for their own act. In dividing cattle between the murdered man's relatives, the order of priority was brother, wife, father, mother, father's brother, father's brother's son, father's sister's son.

683 754 **Killing a witch.** Though in 1939 I could hear of no Dorobo who were reputed to be witches (*tonsit*), such people certainly existed in the past. Apart from killing people by spells, their principal activities seem to have been centred on hunting — putting spells on game traps and on men who were going to hunt. If a witch was shown by a diviner to be guilty of a person's death, he or she might be killed, and no compensation was payable (*mopase*).

609 682 **Killing an enemy.** This means killing any person who is not a Dorobo and is believed or known to have performed any unfriendly act against the Dorobo. The Dorobo have no sort of war organization, and their enemies [701] were generally shot at from the cover of under-growth. Though not a crime, [721] killing an enemy none the less makes the killer ritually unclean and therefore [783] dangerous to others because he has shed human blood. This action is thus brought into the same category as homicide of a Dorobo, and though there is naturally no compensation, purification is required. The face of a man [802] who has killed an enemy is painted (*kemaas tokot*) with stripes of white earth (*emeriot*) on the forehead, down each cheek, and down both sides of the nose. The paint is allowed to remain till it flakes off, and the man does not have to stay in his hut, but goes about as usual; though if he had killed a Nandi he would take care to go to some other part of the forest till he thought it safe to return. In actual fact, Nandi were seldom killed, but one who strayed into the forest might get shot by accident: the body would be taken to a lonely place for the hyaenas to eat, and at any sign of Nandi activity the Dorobo would vanish into the depth of the forest where the Nandi would have little chance of finding them even if they had the inclination to search.

685 **Theft.** Stealing honey is the worst kind of theft, and is almost comparable with intra-tribal cattle-theft among the Nandi. A man who steals honey from someone else's barrels is considered very low indeed, and if found

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out might be shot by the owner, who, if he killed the thief, would have to pay compensation for homicide. 685

If a man steals a honey-barrel from a man's recognized area in the forest, the case can be brought before the *koret* council, and the usual compensation is the payment of a goat, which the thief has to get from the Nandi if he has none of his own, though if the thief's circumstances were good, he might have to pay more. The Dorobo say that stealing honey-barrels is apt to be dangerous, because if a barrel is full of bees, the thief might be injured by their stings if they got his scent and did not recognize it.

I was told that theft of an animal caught in someone else's trap never occurred, partly because of the deep-seated public hatred of such an act, and partly because of the belief that after eating meat stolen from a trap the thief's belly would swell to a great size and he would die.

A person accused of stealing food may, to attest his innocence, take a blade of grass between his teeth and say: *Ingo a corin, kuama susuonno*, "If I am a thief, may this blade of grass eat me". [695]

A man who is found stealing ordinary property is beaten by the owner if he can catch him, but if in doing so the thief is killed, the owner must pay the compensation for homicide. In cases of serious theft, like stealing a man's bow and arrows, the case could be referred to the *koret* council, and the thief might have to pay adequate compensation. A man accused of theft might protest that he was innocent by throwing his knife at a tree and saying: *Ingo a corin, kuama rotuanno*, "If I am a thief, may this knife eat me". [692] [623] [695]

Trespass. To the Dorobo, trespass means hunting on somebody else's land. Normally this is no more than either following an animal across the boundary into another man's land, or else in the heat of the chase picking up the trail of another animal on someone else's land. If the hunter gives the owner of the land some of the meat, this accidental trespass is not considered as an offence. But if a man were deliberately to set out to hunt or trap on another man's land without permission or promise of meat, then the owner might, if he thought fit, kill him, though he would have to pay compensation for homicide. Trespass can occur only in the horde's own forest area. In the old days, when people roamed over the plains below, they could hunt where they pleased, and all they had to do was to keep out of the way of the Masae or Nandi herdsmen.

Adultery. A man who lies with another man's wife is said to *cor*, that is, steal her. He thereby commits an offence against her husband, who may kill him if he catches him in the act, and then, of course, must pay compensation; the wife may get a beating. A woman is not divorced for one act of adultery. 684

Assault. If a man injures another and incapacitates him, he must feed him till he recovers; and should the man eventually die as a result of the injury, the offender will have to pay compensation for homicide. 683

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681 The principle of compensation enters into the legal consequences of offences against the individual, as well as the principle that in certain cases where the injury is grave the injured party may get satisfaction by killing the offender. Of course when he does this, he has to pay for his satisfaction, but the need for satisfaction may override the knowledge that it must be paid for; and the fact that public opinion recognizes a man's right to kill one who offends against him prevents any display of public resentment when he exercises his right. On the other hand, some of the traditional penalties seem to be both excessive and impracticable, even when the need for satisfaction is taken into account. When we are told, for instance, that a man may kill a man who hunts without permission on his land, but that if he does so he must pay compensation, we may be inclined to wonder how such a rule could remain in existence. The explanation is, I believe, that the apparently excessive punishment and the consequent liability to pay compensation act as a deterrent in two directions: the offender may be restrained from trespassing and doing what to his people, from the nature of their life and environment, cannot be anything but economically bad; and the owner may be made to pause before he takes a man's life, even if the offence is considered so serious that by customary law he is entitled to get satisfaction for it. The Dorobo is no fool; he could not have survived if he was. And the African, when engaged in his own affairs, is just as capable as anyone else of restraining his actions.

5. Religion and Magic

a) Belief and Practice

791 Briefly, the basic principles of Dorobo religion are these: There is a God, who is the sun and is behind everything, but beyond the reach of men, who must therefore approach him through intermediaries, the chief of which are the spirits of the dead, which having once been people are still able to maintain contact with the living. If they are offended, catastrophe comes to the living. By means of various observances and ritual practices men manage to keep on the right side of the Unseen World and to maintain the spiritual and material welfare of both horde and individual.

796 "There is one whom we call *Asista*, and he it is who lives above; he is the sun which we see in the sky, and we know no other name for him". Thus did an old Dorobo describe what he understood when he thought of *Asista*, the word which means both "sun" and "god", yet does not imply that the Dorobo are sun-worshippers. Some say that *Arawa*, the moon, is his sister; others, that *Arawa* is his mother; and he appears to have no father. People make no offerings to *Asista* or *Arawa*, but pray to them for help:

Kipendi samak si kesakas kiilencin Asista, Asista, ipiiyec omdit, ngul Asis, ipiiyec kumik, ngul Asis, ipiiyec panyek, "When we go to the forest to hunt we say to *Asista*, '*Asis*, fill us with food', or '*Asis*, fill us with honey', or '*Asis*, fill us with meat'." Similar words are spoken to *Arawa Arawa, ipiiyec omdit*, etc.

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The thunder, *Ilet*, is he who produces rain, and the rainbow, *commisiriet*, is his arm, *ne naiyo pŝk*, which draws up water for "him". Long ago, according to a Dorobo myth, *Ilet* was a man, and one day a Dorobo met him standing on a rock on Tindiret Hill. And because the Dorobo thought him bad, for he brought mist which hid the sun and spoiled the hunting, he shot *Ilet* with a poisoned arrow, and so *Ilet* fled thundering to the sky, where he has been ever since.

Another Dorobo myth tells that once there lived on the earth some elephants and a Dorobo, and *Ilet* lived with them. One day the Dorobo was hungry and made poison from the *keliot* bush [6]. In the night he stuck a poisoned arrow into one of the elephants, and in the morning it was dead. When *Ilet* saw it, he said: "Who has been killing my donkeys?" The Dorobo cut up the dead elephant and dried the meat, and thus had food for many months. When it was finished he killed another elephant in the same way, and again *Ilet* said: "Who is killing my donkeys?" Then the Dorobo said to him: "I killed them, because I was hungry". Then *Ilet* said to himself: "I am afraid. If I stay here, the Dorobo will kill me too". So he called out to *Asista* to take him up to the sky, and he left the Dorobo with the elephants and went up to the sky. And to this day the Dorobo kill elephants with *keliot* poison, like that man of old [7].

Besides *Asista*, *Arasa*, and *Ilet*, the other inhabitants of the Unseen World are the spirits, which are of two kinds, those of the dead, who are on the whole good, and other spirits, which have never been human and are evil. Both are called *cesowiloi* [8], and this term includes the beings called *oiik* by the Nandi, the spirits of the dead, and those called *musambuanik*, the evil spirits. Both these words are used by the Dorobo. One statement made about them was to the effect that *musambuanik kopotok oiik, akenge tukul, kikure cesowiloi*, "the *musambuanik* are not different from the *oiik*, we call them both *cesowiloi*", because though the *musambuanik* are always bad, the *oiik* can at times be bad too. Nevertheless, the Dorobo draw a distinction between the two kinds, and refer to them as *oiik* (the good) and *musambuanik* [9] (the bad).

The spirits of the dead live in the *koret ap cesowiloi* which is underground. "We haven't been there", said Arap Cepsuku, "so we don't know anything about it". But the spirits are there, and they come thence from time to time to visit the living, not only in dreams to pregnant women, but actually into people's huts, to which they travel inside the bodies of snakes. When a snake comes into a hut at night, it is not killed, but some honey is offered to it with the words: *Ui, Anum, i oiindet*, "Go away, So-and-so, for

[6] Acocanthera Schimperi.

[7] It will be noticed that there is a similarity between this and the Nandi myth given by HOLLIS, Nandi, p. 111, and that the myths printed in JRAI 57. 1927. p. 448 and HOLLIS, Masai, p. 266 are of a similar pattern. In the latter, the man is a Dorobo.

[8] The full form of this word is *cesowilo* (*cesowilet*), pl. *cesowiloi* (*cesowilŝk*). It seems to be the same word as the *cesoloi* which MASSAM gives as the Keyo word for both good and evil spirits (Cliff Dwellers of Kenya, 1927).

[9] This word, which the Dorobo have borrowed from the Nandi, has in turn been borrowed by the latter from the Bantu Kavirondo *umusambwa*, "spirit".

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you are a spirit". A man who kills a snake at night in his hut need not necessarily become ill as a result (as the Nandi believe he will), but the ancestor whose spirit was in the snake will show his anger by never going to see the man again and transferring his attentions to some other member of the family. This would no doubt result in bad luck, for the offender would be continually conscious of what he had done. Another account, however, which I think more nearly represents the common belief, is that after offering a snake honey-and-water or milk, the owner of the hut says to it: *Ui si nyon tun ingoii lakuet*, "Go and return when (my wife) bears a child", so that the name of the spirit may be given to the child. According to this account, if a man should kill a snake at night in his hut, he will probably be ill the next day unless he pours some honey-wine on the floor where the snake had been in the night. This should free him from the danger of illness. Snakes seen in the daytime may be killed without fear.

The spirits also appear in daylight as shadows (*urnet*) and they may make their presence known by slight noises, like the sound of a stick being broken. When a man sees an unaccountable shadow, or hears a noise for which he can see no cause, he concludes that it was a spirit which has come to see him, or perhaps just come up to take a walk on earth. But he need do nothing, nor need he be afraid, for at such times the spirits do no harm.

Before setting out to hunt, a man asks the spirits to help him:

Cesowilōk, okónec tiony ne kipare,
Spirits, give-us animal which we-may-kill;
okónec kumik si kiipiiye.
Give-us honey enough-to-satisfy-us.

Offerings of honey-and-water, *lokomek*, are sometimes poured on the ground from gourds with a request to the spirits to provide food in times of scarcity. Such offerings are made by people at their own homes when their affairs are going badly:

Cesowiloi, opiiyec omdit,
Spirits, fill-us-with food,
si kiipiiye sapot.
That we-may-be-filled-with health.

When a man is very ill, he sometimes sees what he takes to be another man lying beside him for a short time, who is invisible to other people. When he has recovered, he realizes that this other man was a spirit who had come to help him to get well, and to take into himself the sickness: *Konyon si korīpe, korn ne korue cito ne mioni, si kosop*, "He came to guard him, and lay where the sick man lay, to make him well".

Evil spirits sometimes attack people when asleep and make them ill. They also play tricks on people and do spiteful and irritating things to them. A man is walking, for example, and suddenly catches his foot, as he thinks, in a liana drawn tight across the path, and falls. But he finds nothing there, and realizes that it was done by an evil spirit. In 1927 I was one night encamped on the edge of the forest between Kipkorom and Timopo, with

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a clear, windless sky. About 10 o'clock a curious whistling noise began to come from a certain part of the forest, and continued, on the same note, and without a break, for several hours. It was certainly no human or machine-made noise, and the Dorobo professed complete ignorance of it. A Nandi who had lived there before the Nandi War told me afterwards that it was an evil spirit whistling in the forest, "for we used to hear them whistling to each other like that in the forest when I was a child".

Between people and the things on which they depend for their existence both spiritual and material there is a connexion which is best expressed in terms of a ritual relationship. Things have a ritual value for people, and people themselves have a ritual status which is a relationship with their surroundings that can be altered for better or for worse according to the way in which they respect the ritual value of the things around them. Religion and magic form the procedure which protects these ritual values and status, while political organization is, in a sense, no more than an effort to maintain the ritual status of the horde in spite of the tendency of its members to injure their own ritual status and in consequence that of the horde also.

Certain things that a person does, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, cause deterioration of ritual status; but the original status may be recovered by the performance of certain ritual actions which may involve some personal effort or sacrifice. Examples of acts which cause loss of ritual status, and the means taken to restore it, are: (1) A girl who bears a child before marriage must have the undigested grass (*eiyat*) from the stomach of a goat rubbed over her face, neck, and breasts, and must then wash it off. (2) After a woman has given birth, she is in a condition of much reduced ritual status, and her husband must rub goat's fat and *eiyat* over her face, breasts, and belly. (3) A man who has killed a Dorobo must have goat's fat rubbed all over him. (4) One who has killed an enemy must have stripes of white earth painted on his face. In all these cases the people have done something which causes loss of ritual status, making them ritually unclean (*suan* or *somis*) and so a source of danger to others till they have been purified. The potential danger is removed by means of something which has a ritual value. Moreover, an essential element in the cleansing process is sacrifice, that is, the use of the material must either involve giving up something which is valued, or it must require some effort or even risk to get hold of. The *eiyat* or fat must be from a domestic animal: if the person concerned has one, he must use it; if he has none, then he must get one, and without delay, which for a Dorobo usually meant that he had to steal it, and thus risk getting killed while doing so. Therefore there is an act of faith in these magico-religious performances, and people believe so firmly in the efficacy of what they do that they are prepared to risk danger in order to get the necessary materials. The use of white earth may entail no more than a journey to get it, but that still means a personal effort on somebody's part. Materials which are used for the restoration of ritual status, and in consequence have a special ritual value, include: the flesh of goats, which is eaten when twins are born, and in cases of incest; *eiyat*, the undigested grass from the stomach of a ruminant (a sheep

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783 or goat where the Dorobo are concerned); *muait ap tangina*, lit. the fat of
789 cow's udder, or butter, i. e. solidified whole milk; honey-wine; and white earth.

Illness is generally believed to be due to the anger of an ancestral spirit,
753 to the spite of an evil spirit, or to witchcraft. Sometimes, on the other hand, it is thought to have a natural cause. When a person is taken ill the relatives, unless they can be sure that the illness has a natural cause, go to a Nandi
[748] diviner of the kind called *sakeyuot*. Diviners used to charge the Dorobo a fee of 2/ — if the cause was witchcraft, and 1/ — if it was due to a spirit. But if a man went down to the lower country where there is malaria, and after his return was taken with ague and fever, they knew it was a natural illness, *korvilu pne*, and did not consult a diviner.

[754] If the cause was found by the diviner to be witchcraft, the witch was indicated according to the methods employed by Nandi diviners, and the
[755] sick man's relatives went to the witch's hut, pulled him or her outside, spat in the face and said: "Come and oil So-and-so that he may recover". The sick person must then be oiled on the face, chest and belly with the fat of a she-goat or with *muait ap tangina*. If the witch refused, the practice was, especially if it was a woman, to tie her to a tree by a thong the other end of which was drawn tightly round the forehead, and then flog her soundly till she promised to do what was necessary. When this had been done, the witch was driven out of the *koret*.

754 A witch might be of either sex, but they were generally women; in fact it is said that there have been no male witches among the Dorobo for many years: they say, too, that they have now no female witches either. Whether or not this is true, I certainly could hear of no case of witchcraft where a Dorobo was believed to be responsible. This does not mean, however, that the Dorobo are entirely free from this evil thing, for sometimes they are bewitched by Nandi. When this has been shown, by divination, to have been done, the Dorobo go to the Nandi who live near the witch and ask for their help in dealing with him or her. This the Nandi generally agree to, for they like witches no more than the Dorobo; and the witch is then dealt with according to Nandi procedure. One of the allegations made by the Dorobo against the Nandi in 1939 was that they did not want Dorobo to live in the Nandi Land Unit (Reserve), and that they were using Nandi witches to get rid of them.

787 The reason that Dorobo go to a Nandi diviner (*sakeyuot*) for the detection of the cause of illness and witchcraft is that they have no diviners of their own, for the people among them known as *orkoiik* are not, like the
[759] Nandi *orkoiik*, diviners, but simply people who know how to cure illness with *kericek ap ketik*, medicines from trees and plants, herbalists whom the Nandi would call *kipkericinik*. These *orkoiik* (sing. *orkoiyot*), besides being able to make herbal medicines, prepare charms to protect people from sickness and the evil eye. Children wear necklaces of *lepuyuwet* seeds (called
[751] *lapuonik* in Nandi) to protect them against the evil eye, and old men wear small pieces of the *rerendet* tree, each about 3 cm. long, tied to their belts as a charm against rheumatism.

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Sometimes people are made ill by evil spirits, which are capricious beings and take dislikes to people without any particular reason. They are said to come to a man when he is asleep and give him a sharp pull, which wakes him with a start. He looks round, and seeing nobody, knows that an evil spirit has attacked him. In a short time he becomes ill, and to cure him, the head of his family, (his father, father's brother or other old man) must sprinkle honey-wine over his head, saying as he does so: *Ui, ui*, "Go, go", ordering the spirit to leave him; and then he will have a chance of recovery.

When a man is about to die, he is allowed to lie undisturbed in his hut, and during the evening of the day on which he dies his body is taken out by his sons, or if he has none, by other men of his family or clan, and laid on its right side (men and women alike) with the legs straight and hands crossed over the breast, on the edge of the forest about three hundred yards away from the hut. If the hyaenas do not come and eat it, nothing is done, the body is just left to rot, and the bones are left lying there. (This, of course, very seldom happens.) The relatives lament on the day the person dies. Those who carry out the body are unclean for three days and remain in their huts, while their people make honey-wine. The old men of the clan are then called together and some of them go up to the carriers, one of them bearing a gourd full of honey-wine, from which he takes a little in his mouth and spits it over each of the men in turn; the other old men then oil their faces with the fat of a sheep or goat, saying: *Omanda anyun, otuiyo ok lakok*, "Go forth now, and mix with the children", meaning that you are now free to meet even children, since you are clean. The old men then drink the honey-wine.

Before a body is laid out for the hyaenas, all the ornaments are removed from a man's body by his sons, and from a woman's by her daughters, who then divide them among themselves. Before the ornaments are worn, however, they are laid aside for three months, after which some of the old men of the clan come and grease them with sheep's fat; and in preparation for the greasing the children make honey-wine for the old men who, after greasing the ornaments, spit some of it over the children and then drink what is left. Very old men and women are buried in narrow holes about 5 feet deep, in which they are laid wearing their clothes. A year after an old man has been buried, his children plant a branch of *mukupcot* (dracaena sp.) on the grave and let it grow. Babies are buried in the dung-heap if there is one, otherwise they are laid out for the hyaenas like other people. The hut in which a person has died is not dismantled, but remains occupied till, on account of normal deterioration it is abandoned.

The dead person's soul enters the body of a hyaena when the body is eaten, and leaves the hyaena when the animal goes to ground, whence it goes under the earth to spirit-land, from which it returns periodically to visit the living.

Closely linked with religion, so closely indeed that sometimes it is not easy to see where the one ends and the other begins, is magic. By this term I mean the belief that by doing or not doing certain things, man can control

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the forces of nature, a belief which (I am convinced) does have the effect of giving him confidence in his ability to deal with an imperfectly understood world. All those parts of human life in which there is an element of uncertainty or danger can be "controlled" by means of magic, not always completely, but with enough coincidental result to confirm the belief that what has been done is the right thing to do and to keep on doing.

The main occupation of the Dorobo was hunting. Unfortunately this is one of the things we know least about, because owing to external pressure the Dorobo have had to give up real hunting and now confine themselves to trapping. It was therefore impossible to get hold of anything more than a few allusions to the hunting magic of the old days. On the one hand, fear of the government has undoubtedly sealed the lips of some of the older Dorobo, for hunting is now forbidden, and they were afraid, quite mistakenly, that if they talked about it, they might get into trouble, as people might think they were still hunting; and on the other hand, ignorance prevents the younger men from talking about it, for most of them have never hunted in the real sense of the word. But there was hunting magic. There was, for example, not only a seasonal division of hunting activities, but a magical division as well. In the dry weather people used to hunt far afield with bow and arrow; in the wet weather they set traps close to home. Now from the magical point of view it is the bow and arrow work that needs help, for in it there is an element of danger to the hunter, and of uncertainty as to whether he will make a kill. In trapping, the process is mechanical, a mere matter of being able to make a trap. All that need be done is to set the trap and wait: sooner or later it will catch something without any danger to the trapper. So when a man was going out with bow and arrow he had to abstain from sexual intercourse immediately before setting out on an expedition, lest the act should put him into mystical danger. Prayers and the observation of omens before going out gave a man further confidence. But when setting traps this abstinence is not necessary.

We have already come across a good deal of magic. The forms of purification after killing people, for instance, are magical as much as religious; so is the cleansing of women after childbirth; and all sorts of things people do in daily life are nothing else but manifestations of the belief in the efficacy of magic. When a man puts a new honey-barrel into a tree and calls out to the bees to enter it, his call is as much a magical utterance as a mere invitation to enter his barrel.

Omens include the following:

If the birds called *kiptiltil* and *kiphunkun* or *kiphoukon* (both species of woodpecker) are seen or heard on the right hand side when starting out to hunt or on a journey, a man will be successful; but if they are on the left, he will be unsuccessful.

If a snake crosses the path from right to left, having first been seen lying still on the side of the path, it is a bad sign, and a man should return home and wait till the next day. But a snake which is seen in the act of crossing a path is of no significance, "for it also is travelling".

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A comet is a sign of coming famine, not merely for the person who sees it, but for everybody.

This short statement may not seem to imply a very great use of magical practices. Nevertheless it is clear from the general trend of knowledge of the Dorobo that the important parts of their life are helped and controlled by magic. The recovery of ritual status after child-birth and after the birth of twins is achieved by magical means; the spirit-name given to a child is intended to link it, in a way that can quite properly be called magical, with the spirit-world, so that it starts life on good terms with those powerful and capricious beings; the whole idea of circumcision (even if it is borrowed) is that of the transition by means of a magico-religious performance from the state of boyhood to that of manhood; these and other observances and avoidances are all magic, and are done because people believe that by doing them they will be enabled to go on existing.

b) Analysis of Beliefs

Ritual Values. Things which have ritual value fall into three categories: (1) things which provide sustenance, or are closely connected with such things; (2) things of the spirit world; (3) things used to restore ritual status:

(1) Honey is sacred, like milk to the Nandi; and in addition to the taboo on eating honey and fruit on the same day, trees, flowering plants, and grass have ritual value because they are all closely connected with the provision of honey: trees, because bees live in them; flowers, because bees get honey from them; and grass, because the flowers and trees may be damaged if it is burned. The last notion means that unlike the pastoral tribes, the Dorobo do not burn grass near forest.

(2) The spirits are offered honey and honey-wine, which thereby acquire an additional value in that their use is directed to both the dead and the living.

(3) Things used for the recovery of damaged ritual status include goats and sheep, and certain of their products, i. e. *eiyat*, and fat, as well as 'butter' or *muait ap tangina* from cows. All these come from sources which formerly were hardly possessed at all by most Dorobo, and even to-day only on a small scale. Honey-wine is used a good deal, as well as white earth.

Each period of life has what might be called a standard ritual status, which is changed to a different standard on circumcision, when a boy becomes a man and a girl a woman, with the right to marry and produce children. The ritual status of normal adults is altered under certain conditions: (1) a man setting out to hunt is not in the same ritual state as when he is staying quietly at home, and he must not have sexual intercourse at such a time, i. e. just before he starts or, should he have an opportunity, while away; (2) a person sick of an illness has a status different from that of other people; (3) touching a corpse causes deterioration of ritual status; (4) the breaking of a taboo affects ritual status; (5) women suffer deterioration of ritual status through the birth of a child before marriage, the birth of twins, and even, to a lesser extent, normal birth. In all cases, the status must be restored by a ritual performance.

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Maintenance of ritual relations with the spirits is effected by the recognized offerings made to them; and with 'nature', on which the food supply depends, by other means (see below).

The World Order. In the myths related at the beginning of § 5, the thunder plays an important part, and is even portrayed as a man. One might almost assume from this that he was believed to be an earth-dweller who began a second life in the sky as the thunder-god who controls the rain, for the notions of rain, mist, and thunder are all interwoven, and the rainbow is "the arm of *Ilet* that draws water for him". These myths reflect the Dorobo attitude of the people to their surroundings. One of the chief features of the forest is heavy rain and frequent mist, and it would be surprising if we did not find among them the conception of some sort of rain-being who brought mist. Again, since rain is plentiful and droughts rare, the rainmaker is not needed, and although the lowest known rainfall, 28 inches in 1933 at a place two miles from the edge of the forest (and probably a little higher in the forest), would indeed constitute a drought year elsewhere, in the absence of both crops and cattle an occasional low rainfall does not matter so long as there is enough to make the plants flower. Even a heavy rainfall of 70 inches or over does no more than cause temporary inconvenience where there are no crops to be damaged and the slopes prevent flooding. The Tindiret forest is, in fact, an ideal place for hunters to live in. However prolonged the dry season, the conditions for wild life are better there than in the open plains below, and low rainfall has never yet prevented a supply of game to hunt or trap. Whether the people are able to kill enough game to ensure a supply of food is another matter, and the inter-relation is not so much that between man and nature in general, but between man and the animals. Man's wrong-doing is thought to produce either a failure of the supply of animals, or his inability to kill or catch what is there in abundance.

Social Values. Things which are important to man because they are indispensable to him have what is called a social value as well as a ritual value, because between man and them there is created a relationship which man must maintain if he is not to suffer. The food supply of a hunting people is got from day to day and depends on the skill of the hunter. It is uncertain, because on any given day the hunter may not find game, or having found it may not kill. But precarious as such a life might seem, there is no evidence that in the past there was often any great scarcity from either of these two causes. The old men say, in fact, that whereas food is scarce under present-day conditions, in the old days when hunting was not restricted it was, if not always abundant, at least enough. Such a statement is not, I think, merely an exaggerated memory of better days, the outcome of a longing to get back to the forest, but it explains in part the otherwise remarkable scarcity of hunting magic and ritual procedure. Some hunting magic there certainly was, and fear and ignorance prevent free talk about it; but it is clear that when the food supply throughout the centuries is found adequate,

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an elaborate ritual will not be built up to increase or protect it. What is expected, and what one does indeed find, is that the hunters will take what steps they can to keep on the right side of those beings which can hinder them or destroy their technical skill.

Wild animals which supply both food and the raw material for technical and domestic processes have social value, and by 1939 cattle and goats were beginning to acquire it, though they were so recently introduced as Dorobo possessions that very little in the way of ritual practices concerning them had developed. Wild animals of almost every kind are of some use to the Dorobo, and while it cannot be asserted that there is actual ritual expression towards many of them, there is nevertheless a not very clearly defined or indeed definable feeling of nearness, almost of kinship with them. This was revealed by listening to conversations between Dorobo as they went through the forest, and demonstrated the intensity of their interest in the animal life of the place, as well as their immediate appreciation of almost invisible signs which the Nandi (and of course myself) passed without even noticing. Although the animals of the forest are wild, and the property of no man, in the sense that cattle are property, the Dorobo feel a proprietary interest in them, especially when they are in a man's own section of the forest. It is clear that they have a feeling for the animals which may be described as "fondness", the nearest (though not very adequate) English rendering of the untranslateable word *comiet*; and that they regard them as intelligent beings, not on the human level, but none the less worthy of respect and friendliness. They are spoken of without loathing, disgust or contempt; and whereas the reaction of the average Nandi to the sight of a buck or its spoor is merely a gleam of greed and lust for meat, the reaction of the Dorobo is much more than that. He no doubt thinks it would be nice to eat, but at the same time he wants to know all about it, where it came from, where it was going, and so forth, and even if he has no intention of hunting it, he will examine the ground to find out all he can, for although only an animal it is one of the living things which share the forest with him. One Dorobo did in fact try to describe his attitude to wild life in the following words:

Sue keliek cepo tukul. Come Okiek si koswen
They-know the-feet which-are-of all. They-like the-Dorobo that they-may-see
tiouik. Ma yaacen tiouik, amu kimenye tukul kuakenge samakia.
the-animals. Not bad the-animals, for we-dwell-in all together the-forest.
Ngomnot ap tiouik ma uu nepo pic, ako ma loo, amu uomen
Intelligence of the-animals not like that-which-is-of men, but not far, for intelligent
ok icek tiouik. Kerke tukul tiond ap samak. Kiome alak, makiome
also they the-animals. Alike every animal of forest. We-eat some, we-eat-not
alak; ako kicome tukul. Ki po samak, ok icek ce po samak.
others; but we-like all. We-are of forest, and they which(-are) of forest.

(The Dorobo know the spoor of all the animals, and they like also to see the animals. The animals are not bad, for we all dwell in the forest together. The intelligence of the animals is not like that of people, but it is not very

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different, for they also are intelligent. Every animal of the forest is alike [10]; we eat some, others we do not; but we like them all. We are of the forest, and they also are of the forest.)

Wild animals for the Dorobo have personality, not the kind that is expressed in the folk-tales of pastoral and agricultural Africans in which animals speak and behave like humans, but a real kind of personality that human beings like the Dorobo can respond to.

Bees, though not themselves sacred, are analogous to cattle among the Nandi, and their product has great social value and hence strong ritual value. Besides giving honey with its many uses, bees provide an occupation which is less strenuous than hunting and can thus be continued by older men who are still reasonably active but not active enough to stand all the rigours of a hunter's life.

Edible plants have social value, but since under existing conditions there is no scarcity of them, there is no ritual relationship between them and men.

The clan has a social value not found among the Nandi, for the Dorobo are not a tribe in the same sense that the Nandi are, and although the expression *ki Okiek*, "we are Dorobo", means a good deal, it has not the same significance that the similar expression *ki Nandi*, "we are Nandi", gives when said by a Nandi. The real unit of the Dorobo is the clan, the significance and solidarity of which we have already tried to explain; and the effect of all that the clan means to the Dorobo is that it has an immense groupvalue, being the element that ensures horde solidarity.

Personification and well-being. Rain and its inevitable concomitant the thunder are perhaps more striking in a forest than the sun, and it is reasonable that they should be personified in one figure: "*Ilet* was a man". This is probably an original Dorobo belief, for to the Nandi *Ilet* has the form of a bird. This personification expresses and fulfills the Dorobo need of personal contact with a dangerous element, and explains the actions of the Dorobo whom SIR CLAUD HOLLIS saw defying the "rain-god" [11]. The notion of *Asis* is much less concrete and definite, and in spite of occasional prayers to him, the conception of his functions is even less clear. Yet while *Ilet* may be regarded as the power which controls the weather, *Asis* seems to be the moving spirit behind everything, with the spirits of the dead as intermediaries between man and 'nature'. It is plain, however, that the well-being of the horde is maintained by keeping on the right side of these powers, and that the avoidance of public delicts is necessary to prevent disaster to the horde. Public delicts thus in one sense come under the head of religion, for their commission entails the breaking of the ritual relationship between man and

[10] That is, although some animals (the human kind or Dorobo) are more intelligent than others, and although the human kind eat some of the others but not all, nevertheless they are all alike, human and non-human, in that they all live side by side in the forest.

[11] Man 1909. 101.

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the other world, and atonement is effected by ritual methods. The primary sanctions against such acts are upheld by the force of public opinion which is based on the fear of loss of well-being through offending the spirits, behind whom are the ultimate powers of nature expressed in the concept of *Asis*.

But these ultimate powers cannot be reached by man, who can neither see nor understand them, and people like the Dorobo (and indeed many African peoples) must therefore have some kind of intermediary. First come the *cesowiloi*, the spirits of the dead, to whom each man addresses his own prayers, and with whom there is a private relationship based on the fact that the spirits were once human beings themselves. Then protection is looked for through the use of tangible material objects in the form of amulets, such as the *lepwyuwet* against the evil eye, *rerendet* against rheumatism, and perhaps the double spiral ear-rings occasionally worn, although the significance of the last among the Dorobo is not known. These are material intermediaries in that they act between man and the unseen as protectors.

Formalized religion. The notion of a spiritual being which dwells in the Kiet or 'universe' is crystallized in the word *Asis(ta)*, borrowed from the Nandi with perhaps some of the Nandi notions of its nature. He is identified with the sun, and prayers are made to him for success, and sometimes to his mother (or sister, for the accounts vary) *Arawa* the moon as well. This is the extent of the formal part *Asis* plays in Dorobo religious life, but he none the less performs the necessary function of being a recognized object to which men can turn, especially in thought, for restoration of confidence, which is no doubt one of the primary functions of the formalized concept of a major spiritual being, who provides people with an entity that they may look to for help and protection.

The belief in the existence of spirits is much more concrete, and more practical, for one section of the spirits were once men themselves and are therefore much nearer to men than *Asis* and well fitted to stand between men and the unseen world as mediators. The evil spirits are merely harmful or irritating according as the whim takes them, but they seem to play a relatively unimportant part in the religious life of the Dorobo, however much trouble and discomfort they may cause. They are just things that must be endured. A statement made by a Dorobo that the *musambuanik*, the evil spirits, are the same as the *oiik* or good spirits, is to be explained by the belief that even the good spirits can be malevolent at times, for malevolence is more noticed than benevolence, and it is necessary to maintain proper ritual relations with them to prevent malevolence. But unlike the evil spirits the *oiik* have a definite home somewhere under the earth, whence they return to visit and take care of the living, in whom they take an interest, and the part taken by the *oiik* in Dorobo life may in fact be summarized thus: (a) they can provide or withhold food; (b) they can cause illness if angered; (c) they can desert a man and so spoil his luck and neutralize his skill; (d) they are at the back of the legal sanctions as intermediaries between man and the ultimate spiritual power that controls the universe.

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A general statement made by one elder was that evil spirits cause illness, and good spirits cure it, which in the light of the total of what we know of Dorobo beliefs is more or less a reasonable summary, even though the good spirits can also bring illness. But the fact is that the good spirits are believed to be able to do both good and evil, and that the commission of public delicts reacts on them, so that, in the words of a Dorobo elder, "such things are not done, because they are bad, for the spirits do not like them".

It will be noticed that there is a good deal of similarity between Dorobo and Nandi religion [12], and there can be little doubt that much, though not all of it, has been borrowed from the Nandi along with other culture elements. It is, I think, necessary to mention this, in case anyone should be tempted to find 'parallels' which in reality do not exist. Dorobo religious beliefs are mainly not a parallel growth, but directly borrowed, and the resemblance to those of the Nandi will therefore be very strong both in general and in detail.

[12] As described e. g. in my booklet "The Nandi". (Peoples of Kenya Series.) Nairobi 1944.